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COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
Third session
Geneva, 12-16 May 1997
Agenda item 10

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT ON ITS THIRD SESSION

DRAFT REPORT

Chapter ...

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development held its third session at Geneva from 12 to 16 May 1997. The Commission held ..... meetings (1st to .....) and a number of informal meetings.

2. In his introductory statement, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD outlined the major global economic and technological changes that were occurring and noted that, while some developing countries were able to reap the benefits arising from those changes, others, especially the least developed countries, lacked the resource base and technological capability necessary to take advantage of the opportunities offered and ran the risk of marginalization or even total exclusion. UNCTAD IX had emphasized the need for mastery of technology in order to achieve sustainable economic progress. Acquiring technological capability, especially in new technologies such as information and communication

technologies, was a *sine qua non* for effective integration into the international economic system and for enhancing competitiveness. While noting the timely decision of the second session of the Commission to focus on information technologies, he emphazised the need to address the challenges that these technologies posed for developing countries and countries in transition. For the United Nations, the critical question was what could be done to facilitate the access of these countries to the new information and communication technologies and to make these technologies contribute to development. Since the mid-1980s, UNCTAD had been playing a considerable role in promoting the diffusion and effective application of information technologies in developing countries and had developed several programmes to ease some of the constraints faced by developing countries and countries in transition in taking advantage of these technologies. It had developed software to improve debt management, as well as to promote trade efficiency through the establishment of Trade Points which provided up-to-date information on global markets and enhanced the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises. When contemplating the key issues in science and technology for the next millennium, it was essential to bear in mind that bridging the gap between those countries which had the capacity to generate and utilize knowledge and those which did not would remain a major challenge for Governments and the international community in the years to come.

3. The Chairman of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development noted that science and technology was a tremendous force for progress, and developing countries placed great hope in science and technology as an ally in their struggle for development. To deal adequately with science and technology, a judicious mix of market and government involvement was necessary. Referring to the work of the Commission, he stressed that it should be a functional advisory board on science and technology matters to United Nations organizations and Governments. This objective was being pursued, and the gap between the Commission's necessary paper work and concrete action in favour of beneficiaries was being bridged. General guidelines worked out by the Commission could be instrumental in working out specific national strategies. During the period 1995-1997, the Commission had undertaken many useful activities, including the work of the Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies for Development and the Advisory Board on Gender Issues and the work carried out jointly with

UNCTAD on science, technology and innovation policy (STIP) reviews, as well as work on a common vision for the future contribution of science and technology to development.

4. The success of this work owed a great deal to the personal involvement and active participation of many members of the Commission and to the effective support of the secretariat, as well as to the financial support received from the regular budget and extrabudgetary sources. He expressed the hope that, beyond the circles of United Nations organizations and Governments, NGOs, academics and the private sector would read the reports and recommendations of the Commission and help public institutions to translate the advice of the Commission into concrete actions. The Commission should continue dealing primarily with generic or intersectoral issues and maintain the high quality of its work. Finally, he paid tribute to the late representative of Burundi to the Commission, Mr. S. Ruzenza, and to his contribution to the work of the Commission.

B. Attendance

5. In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 46/235, the Commission is composed of 53 States Members of the United Nations, elected by the Economic and Social Council for a term of four years on the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

6. The session was attended by _____ States members of the Commission. Observers of other States Members of the United Nations and of non-member States and representatives of specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex __ to the present report.

[TO BE COMPLETED]

C. Election of officers

7. The Commission at its second session in 1995 had elected, by acclamation, the following officers for its third session:

Chairman:	Mr. J. George Waardenburg (Netherlands)
Vice-Chairmen:	Mr. Arnoldo K. Ventura (Jamaica)
	Mr. Hilal A. Raza (Pakistan)
	Ms. Marina Ranga (Romania)
	Mr. Messanvi Gbeassor (Togo)

D. Agenda

8. At the 1st meeting of its third session, on 12 May 1997, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda for the session, as contained in document E/CN.16/1997/1 (see annex __ to the present report).

E. Organization of work

9. At the same meeting, the Commission also approved the organization of work for the session (see E/CN.16/1997/Add.1).

F. Documentation

10. The documents before the Commission at its third session are listed in annex ___ to the present report.

[TO BE COMPLETED]